

"His house," I overheard my mother phone,
"was all lit up like Christmas in mid-June--"
I'd noticed her at windows, looking out.
"--that Filipino houseboy--" she went on--

"a wild party--drunk, naked men--
at least they could have pulled the drapes shut tight,"
behind the horror in her moral tone
hennaed envy peeking through the blind.

Athena May Applewaite

Arthritic in a wheelchair
beside a vase of Ming,
she spoke of Roman noses--
she loved the noble thing.

A stone bust she had sculptured--
her father--stood behind,
dreaming on a pedestal
where she had placed the mind.

"I had to give up carving--
my hands--and start on poems--"
Beyond the window, orange trees
shone brilliant with starred blooms.

"But found a form that was the same
in words as well as stone--
there is a form to everything--
some day it will be known."

The white cat leaped from her lap
and pinkly flicked at fleas.
She wheeled and plucked a book
and held it on her knees

and read a poem about
owls, I think it was--
her white hair like a helmet
shining in the sun.

She could have been Athene,
ancient, and still wise--
but nothing in her poem
touched us like her eyes.

-- Harold Witt

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